

AT INDUSTRIAL PARK

Rigs told
to avoid
toxin siteBy SARAH GREENBLATT
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South Plainfield officials said they have ordered a local trucking company to stop using a highly contaminated portion of the Hamilton Industrial Park, which has been targeted for cleanup under the federal Superfund program.

Mirage Trucking, one of about 15 businesses located in the industrial park, stores vehicles on a portion of the property that contains hazardous concentrations of contaminants, according to borough Health Officer Michael Bonk.

"We're trying to get them to move out of there and close that out," said

Bonk, referring to the enclosed portion of the industrial park, which is located on Hamilton Boulevard near Spicer Avenue.

Trucks and cars have remained stored within the fenced-off area, despite the findings of a report completed in January by the federal Environmental Protection Agency documenting high levels of lead and polychlorinated biphenyls — or PCBs — in soil samples taken there.

Based on that report, the EPA has designated the entire industrial park a potential health hazard. But the most severe contamination was found within an enclosed 1.5-acre portion of the site where the trucking company has stored vehicles, under a lease agreement with park owner D.S.C. Enterprises of Newark, Bonk said.

"It's a hazardous-waste site, and it shouldn't be used," Bonk said.

Some soil samples taken within the enclosed portion of the site contain PCBs at thousands of times the acceptable levels, according to the EPA report.

While federal guidelines set safe limits for PCBs at 2 parts per million, three soil samples taken within the enclosed area registered readings of 270 ppm, 4,700 ppm and 51,000 ppm.

The report also noted high levels of lead in one of the samples taken in the area. Federal guidelines set safe limits for lead at 600 ppm, but one soil sample registered 1,740 ppm.

According to the report, portions of the site are strewn with electrical and transformer parts, some of which are embossed with the name of the past property owner, Cornell-Dublier Electronics, which occupied the site from 1936 to 1962.

Concerns about contamination

Please see Toxin, page B2

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■ Continued from page B1

in the enclosed portion of the industrial park prompted the Zoning Board in October to block renewal of a temporary permit that had been given to Pepe Driving School to conduct truck driving lessons there.

Board Chairman Bill Thomas said the board had authorized two 90-day use permits earlier last year, before learning that high levels of contamination had been found through the EPA study.

EPA spokesman Rich Cahill said yesterday that he was unaware that the enclosed portion of the site was still in use and that the agency will "look into" the matter.

Cahill said that D.S.C. agreed this week to comply with an agency order to erect fencing around the property, pave a contaminated dirt driveway and implement engineering controls to prevent tainted runoff from reaching the Bound Brook tributary that borders the site.

D.S.C. is due to meet with agency officials in the next week, Cahill said.

In the meantime, Borough Attorney Patrick Diegman said officials from Murage have agreed to stop using the area by Wednesday.